

## NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

## REPORT

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject:  <b>Monitoring Report - Income Maximisation by Welfare Rights Officers</b>
FROM: Jim Dickie Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: 24 November 1998	
REPORT AUTHOR: Peter Barry	
REF: PB/GMcl/JD/DH	

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform members of the committee of the positive work carried out by Welfare Rights Officers in tackling poverty in North Lanarkshire January 1998 to December 1998.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 There are currently 12 Welfare Rights Officers posts in North Lanarkshire Social Work Department.
- 2.2 Key Welfare Rights Officers tasks include representation at appeal tribunals, dealing with complicated cases, supporting social work colleagues to offer a welfare rights service, training and seminars.
- 2.3 This report does not deal with the financial impact of welfare rights work carried out by other social work staff groups such as social workers, home helps, occupation therapists or hospital based staff.
- 2.4 Since January 1998 the Social Work Department has monitored on a weekly basis all Welfare Rights Officers work undertaken. Monitoring includes data on:
- i) general advice given to colleagues and the public
  - ii) the completion of review requests where benefits claims have been refused
  - iii) representation at Social Security Appeal Tribunals, and Appeals to the Social Security Commissioner
  - iv) specialist advice such as admission to residential care and home care assessments
  - v) benefit uptake campaigns
  - vi) training and seminars

- 2.5 A study of the monitoring returns for a 22 week period, January to June 1998, enables the Social Work Department to predict the **annual outcome** of benefits generated for the full year. From these figures predictions can be made of outcomes for the full year.

### 3 OUTCOMES

- 3.1 Research carried out on the monitoring form indicates that this group of 12 staff will have generated £3.4 million in weekly benefits for residents in North Lanarkshire during the current financial year.
- 3.2 This research further indicates that £795,000 will be generated in lump sum backdated payments during the same period.
- 3.3 Research also indicated the following actual outcomes for the period 19 January 1998 to 19 June 1998 i.e. a 22 week period.
- i) 3731 individual pieces of advice on benefits given to social work colleagues and the public.
  - ii) 401 reviews carried out for claimants whose claims for benefits have not been successful.
  - iii) 1401 direct contacts with members of the public.
  - iv) 329 individual appeal tribunals representing members of the public.
- 3.4 It can be predicted that by the end of this calendar year the following minimum outcomes can be evidenced
- i) 8819 individual pieces of advice on benefits to social work colleagues and the public.
  - ii) 948 reviews carried out for claimants whose claims for benefits have not been successful.
  - iii) 3311 direct contacts with members of the public.
  - iv) 778 individual appeal tribunals representing members of the public.

### 4 RECOMMENDATION

Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.



**Jim Dickie**  
**Director of Social Work**  
**17 November 1998**

*For further information on this report please contact George McNally, Principal Officer (Strategy) (TEL: 01698 332063)*